THE PHILOSOPHY OF MARRIAGES OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (S.A.W.)

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NOTE

This booklet is the translation of one of the publications in Persian from the Institute *"Dar Rahe Haq"* of Qum, Iran. This Institute is one of the most active and energetic Islamic Centre in Iran.

A Group of Muslim Brothers

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In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent,
the Merciful

INTRODUCTION

In the early part of eighteenth century, the Christian writers started with new tactics of attacking Islam. They aimed, through publications full of lies and slanders, at diverting attention from the noble framework of Islam and degrading the exalted person of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (May peace be on him and his progeny).

the basis of that adverse propaganda werr he books written by Christian writers of the fifteenth century. A writer had written a book under the title 'Refutation to the Religion of Muhammad',

which became the source of later writers against Islam. These writers were unacquainted with the real facts about Islam, due to their ignorance of the Arabic language in which Islamic history and holy books were then available.

It is not strange, therefore, to see them writing against the Prophet of Islam, accusing him of lust because he had married a number of wives, whilst other Muslims were restricted to a maximum of four at a time. (They perhaps forgot that the writers of the present Bible have openly accused their own Prophets of having committed adultery!)

Of course, by misinforming their Christian brothers, and slandering the Prophet of Islam, they hoped to cause a set-back in the fast progress of Islam. But these tactics did not succeed much. We find a number of learned and fair-minded Christian writers defending the Holy Prophet against such slanders, in apologetic language.

Undoubtedly these stories of slanders are totally unacceptable to the Muslims, since part of their faith is to believe in the infallibillity (*'Ismat* or Sinlessness) of the Prophets.

But at the same time it is imperative to acquaint the non-Muslims with the true facts.

VERDICT OF HISTORY

Unbiased historians, both Muslims and Christians, are agreed that the number of marriages. contracted by the Prophet of Islam was not as a result of lust or to satisfy the sexual desires. If this had been the case, he would not have married the twice-widowed Khadijah, 46 years old, at the youthful age of 25 when one is full of emotion and sexual urge

Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) lived together with his first (and, at that time, only) wife, Khadijah, happily for 26 years with great mutual affec tion, despite the fact that young and beautiful girls of Arabia were easily available to him and were keen to be married to the Prophet. Not even

once, during that period, did the Prophet take another wife. Undoubtedly he would have at least considered another younger wife simultaneously with Khadijah if he ever suffered from lust and fondness of young women, particularly when the country's customs wholly approved unlimited marriages.

CRITICS DUMBFOUNDED

Let us look at the life history of the Prophet of Islam. During the prime of his life, he remains satisfied with an aged and twice-widowed wife, and does not even think of another. Then during the last ten years of his life, after passing the age of fifty, in his old age, when he is surrounded by various difficult problems of the newly-borne Islamic State, he starts marrying a number of wives.

Ask these Christian writers why this phenomenon?

What logical answer can these critics give to this amazing question?

Was it not a difficult exercise and heavy burden to marry widows and support their orphans? Was it easy for a perfectly dignified man in the person of Mubammad (s.a.w.) to marry women of different outlook, characters and tribes, including some of much younger age who were still unaware of the full responsibilities of life?

Let us ponder over the reply to these questions as given by a famous western historian, Thomas Carlyle in his book "Heroes and Heroes' Worship". He says in effect that contrary to what his enemies accuse him, Muhammad was never lusty and sexualist and that it was a slander only out of prejudice against him and this indeed is a great injustice.

John Devenport says, "and it may then be asked, is it likely that a very sensual man, of a country where polygamy was a common practice, should be contented for five-and-twenty years with one wife, she being fifteen years older than himself".

LIST OF WIVES OF THE PROPHET OF ISLAM

After the death of his first wife, Khadijah, he married upto twelve wives in this order:-

(1) Sawdah
(2) `A'ishah
(3) Umm-Salamah
(4) Hafsah
(5) Zaynab bind-Khuzaymah
(6) Zaynab bint-Jahsh
(7) Umm-Habibah (Ramla)
(8) Maymunah
(9) Zaynab bint-`Umais
(10) Juwayriyah

(11) Safiyah
(12) Khawlah bint-Hakim

Let us examine the circumstances and conditions under which these marriages had taken place.

In principle, it can be stated that the marriages were contracted with one or more of the following objectives:-

(1) For the sake of caring for the orphans and looking after the poor widows. These were some Muslim women who had earlier enjoyed high dignity in the Arab society. But on the death of their husbands, their status and even faith were in jeopardy, because their tribal chiefs would take them back and compel them to renounce Islam, thus converting them back to polytheism.

For example, Sawdah had migrated to Abyssinia where her husband died, and she became

absolutely without helper. It was the time when the Prophet had lost Khadijah, his first wife; so he married Sawdah.

Likewise, Zaynab daughter of Khuzaymah, was an old-aged widow, who after the death of her husband was inflicted with poverty, despite her being amiable and being known as 'Ummul-Masa-*kin'* (Mother of the poor). The Prophet married her to uphold her dignity and she died of old age only after two years of that marriage.

(2) For the sake of enacting a new law and eradicating injustice by the ignorant tribes. For example, Zaynab bint-Jahsh was the daughter of the Prophet's aunt. She was married, at the reco-mmendation of the Prophet, to Zayd ibn-Harithah, the freed slave and adopted son of the Prophet. This marriage was contracted to eradicate the dis-crimination against slaves and poor and to empha-size the Islamic equality and brotherhood, as Zay-nab was from the family of `Abd al-Muttalib, the grandfather of the Holy Prophet and the Chief

of Quraysh, whereas Zayd was a slave who was freed by the Prophet.

Unfortunately, Zaynab due to her family pride, did not get along well with Zayd despite Prophet's persuations. The rift between the two culminated into divorce. Meanwhile, the system of adoption of children was expressly forbidden by Allah. So, when Zayd divorced Zaynab, the Prophet of Islam, at the express command of God, married Zaynab; and, thus, put an end to the then prevalent belief that adopted sons were like real sons and that wives or widows of adopted sons were like daughters-in-laws.

(3) For the sake of freeing prisoners and slaves. For example, 'Juwayriyah' was from a prominent tribe of *Banul-Mustalaq*. In a war against Islam this tribe was defeated; and Juwayriyah, the daughter of their Chief, was held in captivity. The Prophet married her to set an example of protection and good treatment to prisoners of war.

On seeing that the prisoners had become relatives of the Holy Prophet by marriage, the Muslims released all the prisoners of war held by them. According to Ibne Hisham, over one hundred families of *Banul-Mustalaq* were freed from captivity as a result of this marriage.

(4) For the sake of uniting some prominent Arab tribes who often were at logger heads with each other and to safeguard the internal political status of Islam.

The Prophet married `Aishah daughter of Abu Bakr from the tribe of *Bani Tim*, Hafsah daughter of `Umar ibn AI-Khattab from the tribe of *Adi*, Umm-Habibah daughter of Abu Sufyan from the tribe of *Umayyah*, Safiyah daughter of Huaiy bin Akhtab of the Jewish tribe of *Bani an-Nadir*, and Maymunah from the tribe of *Bani Makhzum*.

Umm-Habibah (i.e. Ramla) was daughter of

Abu Sufyan of *Bani* Umayyah who was the bitterest enemy of the Prophet and had repeatedly fought against him. She, as a Muslim, was in great distress since she was divorced from her original husband (who had become a Christian in Abyssinia) and her father was a great enemy of Islam.

Seeing her deprived of every help from parent and divorced from husband, the Prophet married her in sympathy. This marriage also gave a chance to the people of *Bani Umayyah* to soften their hearts for Islam.

Safiyah was widowed daughter of Huaiy bin Akhtab, one of the chiefs of Jewish tribe of *Bani an-Nadir.* When the prisoners of this tribe were released by the Muslims, the Prophet married her in order to safeguard her status; and, thus, also linking himself with one of the great Jewish tribes of that time, and paving the way for, them to come nearer to Islam.

Maymdnah was 51 years of age and from a

prominent tribe of *Bani Makhzum* whom the Prophet married in the year 7 after *Hijrah.*

The above marital history of the Prophet clearly shows the ndble aim and objectives for which he married a number of wives. It is not diffi cult to see that none of these marriages was for personal satisfaction of sexual desires as unjustifiably accused by the Christian writers. Also, it is important to remember that all of these marriages, except that with `Aishah, were contracted with women who were widowed not only once, but often twice or thrice.

THE END